1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15



324 172 Pownall (319) refers to another of these bowls in the British Museum, which belonged to a collection brought from Jamaica by Sir Hans Sloane. This is perhaps the one depicted by Joyce (p. 74, pl. VI, fig. 1) which resembles No. 3 described above.

In 1921 the writer found a number of these vessels, but all badly broken up, on the right bank of Rio Paulaya. Some of them were not detached from the quarry out of which they were formed. It is, however, not known from what site the marble was quarried. Bowls of similar material and technique have also been met with in the Bay Islands and in the valley of Rio Ulua. A large specimen is in the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation (Hodge: 56).

532 172 STATUES OR CARVED PILLARS.—At certain old sites may be found some high slabs of stone which were originally placed upright, reminding one of our tombstones. Nearly all of them have now tumbled down. Occasionally some greatly obliterated geometric designs, or spirals, may be found on them.[28]

Spinden (539) pictures a stela or stone pillar on Rio Tocomacho (Honduras) which is 8 feet in height and nearly a foot square. It is covered on all sides with pictographic designs, chiefly spirals and scrolls; on one of the four faces there is a grotesque figure with a reptilelike creature on its head. Such stone pillars may also be found in other parts of the Mosquito Coast, but they are not common. Large stone statues, attaining as great a height as 12 feet, are, however, the outstanding feature of the archeology of the Pacific half of Nicaragua, especially of the great lake region.

Le Baron (217–222) describes and depicts some stone ruins from the left bank of Rio Prinsapolca, about 134 miles above its mouth. They consist of three monoliths, about 8 feet high, forming a triangle; the ground between them was paved with stones. These monoliths had fallen to the ground and were broken; on some of the faces there were rude carvings, greatly obliterated.

## CARVED ROCKS

212 172 Pictographs may be found on the rocks in the bed of nearly all the larger streams, generally at the rapids and falls. They must have been made many centuries ago, for they are considerably waterworn, and often may be followed easier with the finger than with the naked eye. Many of these carved rocks are visible during the dry season only and are completely under water during the rainy months, owing to the rise of the rivers. (Fig. 1.)

WHERE THEY ARE FOUND.—Such carved rocks have been observed by the present writer at different places on the Rio Coco (at Wirapani,

[28] The modern Indians have no traditions concerning these ruins found in their territory, and ascribe them to the evil spirits.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15



Waspuk, Kiwras, above Raiti, at Kunkun mawan and at Tawit); they are known to exist also in the rivers Plátano, Patuca, Wawa, Prinsapolca, Tuma, Punta Gorda, Indio, and Maíz. They appear to be particularly numerous on the Siquia and Mico, which two streams together form the Rio Escondido or Bluefields River (Boyle, b: I, 296–299; Pim and Seemann: 401; Wickham, b: 243, 245; Belt: 52–53). Some extravagant stories of great statues carved in human and animal shape and hewn out of a solid cliff on the upper Rio Mico have been circulating on the coast, but it appears that these giant statues are merely rude carvings on the rocks similar to the ones found in other parts of the country. Carved rocks are found in many rivers emptying into the Caribbean Sea, and a good account of those met with in South America has been given by Koch-Grünberg.[28] The geographical names Gualpulban (M.: *walpa-ulbaŝ*), Quiulna (T., P.: *ki-ulna*) and Quiultan (U.: *ki-ultaŝ*), which are found scattered in various parts of the Mosquito Coast, may furnish a clue to the presence of such pictographs in the neighborhood. These various names mean "written rock" or "painted rock" and correspond to the Spanish "piedra pintada."

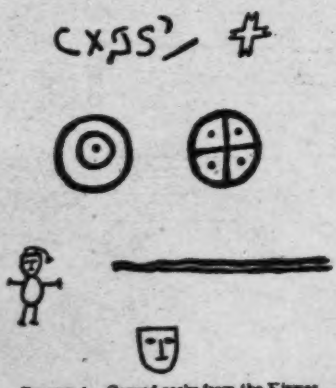

FIGURE 1.—Carved rocks from the Kirwas Rapids (Rio Coco)

MOTIFS.—The carvings consist chiefly of very curious figures, which it is often difficult to identify. Sometimes they represent human figures, but the greater part of them appear to be animal designs: jaguars, alligators, monkeys, frogs, tortoises and serpents. Occasionally geometric figures, as spirals and scrolls, are depicted, but floral designs are conspicuous by their absence. Sapper (a: 275) pictures some carved rocks from various parts of Rio Coco: Valpa ûlpan (=Wirapani), Kiulna (=Kunkun mawan) and Davuit (=Tawit). A photograph of a large bowlder with carved figures from Rio Plátano is given by Spinden (537).

ARTISTS.—We do not know who were the authors of this work. The Miskito are by all means out of the question, for they are comparatively new immigrants into the regions where pictographs are to be found. They ascribe them to the Sumu, who formerly occupied most of the territory in question. But the latter Indians are unanimous in declaring that this work was done by the evil spirits (*walasa*) at a time when the rocks were still soft.

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[28] Südamerikanische Felszeichnungen. Berlin, 1907.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15



WRITING.—The carvings on one of the bowlders at the Kiwras Rapids on Rio Coco are said to resemble somewhat the characters of the Latin alphabet. Wickham (b: 245) heard of some "writing" on rocks of Rio Mico, which he considered—quite erroneously of course—inscriptions in Latin made by the early Jesuit missionaries. Neither Miskito nor Sumu appear to have possessed the art of writing as did their western neighbors, the Nicarao and Chorotega. According to Oviedo the two latter tribes had books of parchment made from deer skins. Picture writing was also practiced, and is still, by the Cuna Indians of Panama, as has recently been ascertained by Nordenskiöld.[39]

## RUBBER COLLECTING

In former days the Indians used to collect rubber from a wild-growing tree (*Castilla* sp.), which is found nearly all over the country. This industry started about 1860, first on Rio San Juan, and gradually spread to the remainder of the Mosquito Coast. The Indians sold their rubber to the local merchants, who generally made large advances to them. About 1912 and 1913, when the export of rubber ceased, owing to the low price caused by the large production of plantation rubber in the British and Dutch East Indies, many Indians found themselves heavily in debt to the merchants.

The rubber collectors or "huleros" first made a rude ladder out of the lianas that hang from the trees; this was done by tying short pieces of wood across them with the aid of smaller lianas. Later iron spurs were introduced and attached to the feet to climb the trees. With the machete they then scored the bark with cuts having the shape of the letter V, the point being downward. Such cuts were made all the way up the trunk, at a distance of about 3 feet from each other; they extended nearly round the tree, but the latter was on no account to be completely girdled. At the bottom of these series of cuts a spout was inserted to conduct the latex juice into buckets or other containers. In about half an hour all the whitish milk had run out of the tree.

Afterwards the latex was strained and caused to coagulate by the addition of an alkaline decoction made from the juice of the chajmol vine (*Ipomoea bona-nox* L.; M.: *tatako;* T. and P.: *tutuk;* U.: *ulupuy*) or from that of a liana (*Calonyction speciosum*); this was combined with the latex in the proportion of 1 pint to 2 gallons. To prevent putrefaction coagulation must be effected within about 24 hours after the collection of the milk. The resulting mass was then made into round flat cakes, which were exported under the name "sheet rubber"

[39] Picture Writings and Other Documents. Comparative Ethnographical Studies, vol. 7, part 1 (1928) and part 2 (1930).